Showcase

OOK 4

Anirudh
Singh

Gaurav
rivastav

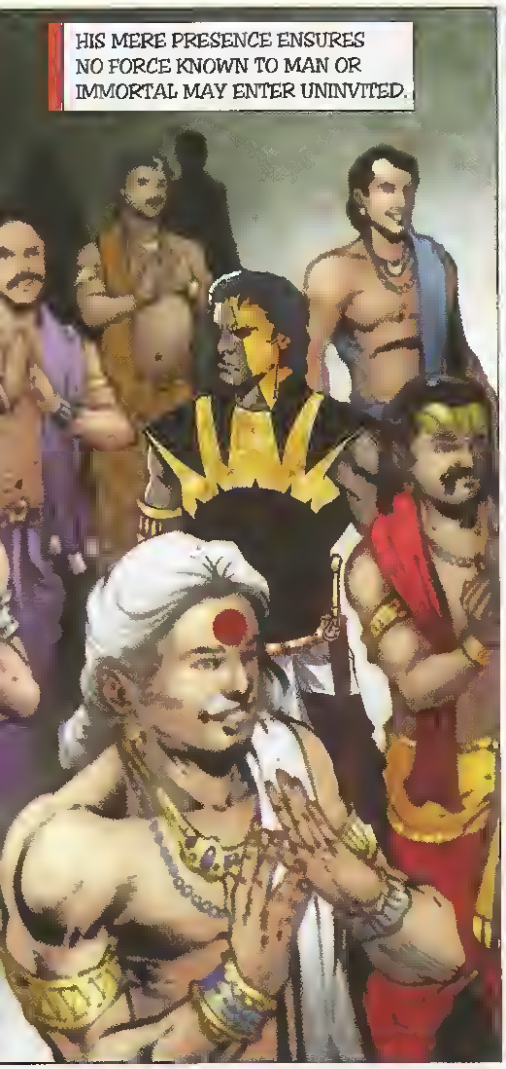
Sumit
Kumar

MIGHTY LORD OF ALL THE EYE CAN SEE, I BRING YOU THIS GIFT, A HORN CARVED FROM THE ONLY KNOWN TUSK BROKEN OFF ANYWHERE.
MIGHTY ELEPHANT OF INDRA. IT HAS BEEN IN MY FAMIL...
PLACE IT WITH THE REST.
HUH.
HAHAHAHAHA

AM I MAKING YOU NERVOUS, HONORED GUESTS?
A FEW OF MUMBLE POLITEY. OTHERS BEG FORGIVENESS.
DARK WHISPERS IN HIS HEART URGE HIM TO CRUSH THESE GUTLESS KINGS LIKE THE INSECTS THEY ARE.

HE RESISTS THE URGE
ALL HAIL THE KING OF KINGS, LORD OF THE KURU
HE OWNED THEIR DESTINIES EITHER

ONE KING MOVES LIKE A SHADOW THROUGH THE CROWD


HIS MERE PRESENCE ENSURES NO FORCE KNOWN TO MAN OR IMMORTAL MAY ENTER UNINVITED.

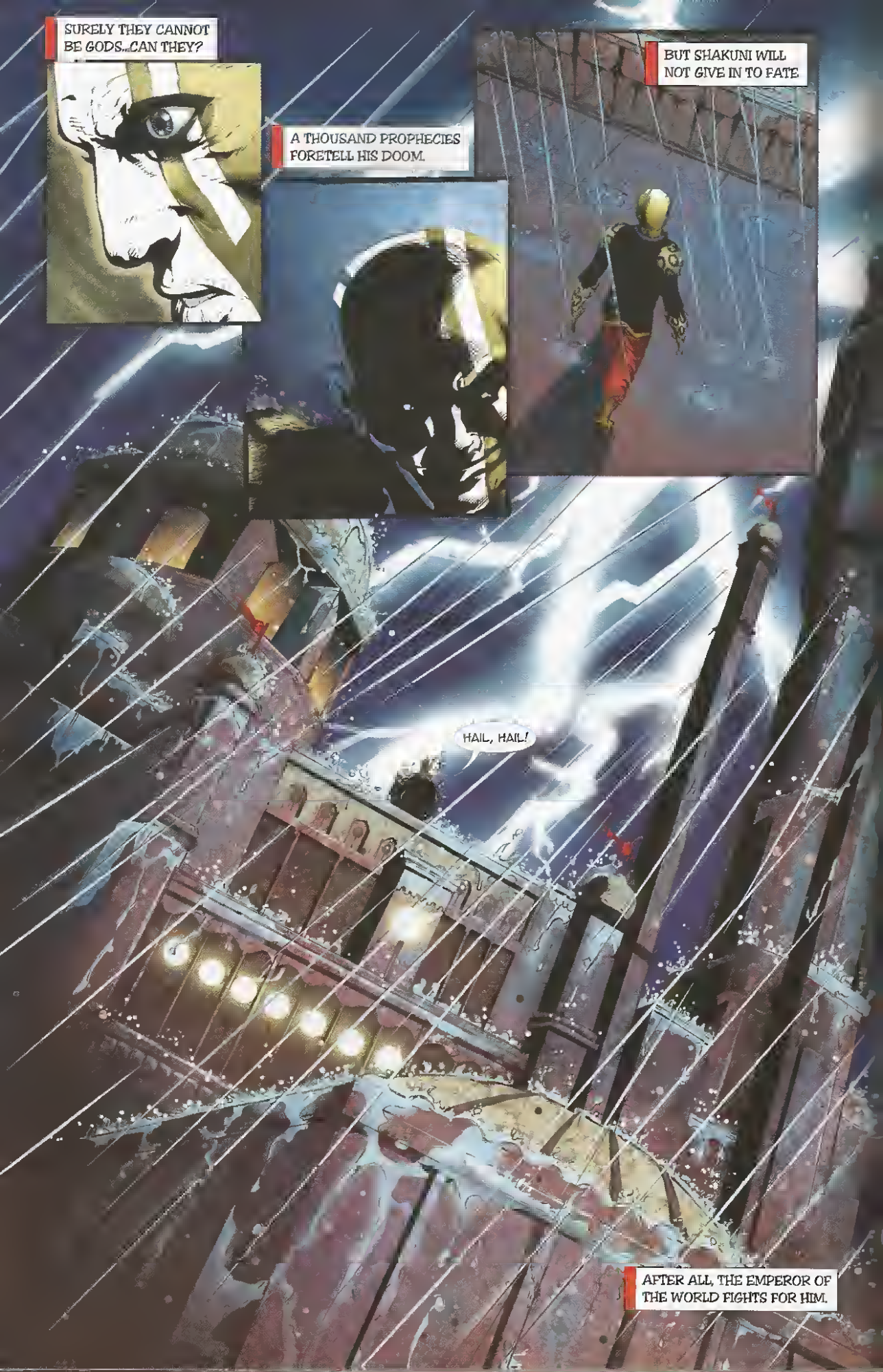
FOR DIVINE BLOOD FLOWS IN HIS VEINS TOO..

KARNA, FISTBORN GUARDS HIS BROTHER TONIGHT.

ALL HAIL DURYODHANA, VANQUISHER OF INDRAPRASTHA, LORD OF THE FOUR CORNERS, MASTER OF THE LOKPALAS.. DIVINE EMPEROR OF THE WORLD!
HAIL HAIL!
ALL HAIL THE KURU, MAY THE DYNASTY LAST AN ETERNITY!
HAIL HAIL!
HAIL HAIL!
HAIL THUS, AND TREMBLE YE WHO DISHONOR THIS OATH.
HAIL HAIL!
HAIL HAIL!

MEN ARE WEAK OF SPIRIT AND QUICK TO FIND GODS.
WHO HAS SEEN DISTANT STARS AND KNOWN OF LIFE BEYOND THIS EARTH.
NOT HE. NOT SHAKUNI, SEVENTH KEY OF THE ORDER OF THE MAGI.
IF ANY MAN CAN KNOW WHAT THEY TRULY ARE, IT MUST BE HIM.

FIRE AND WRATH WILL FLOW IN HIS WAKE
AND AN AGE OF MAN WILL END.
SUCH IS THE FATE OF THE EMPEROR OF THE WORLD.
SHAKUNI, MASTER OF THE ARCANE KNOWS THIS.


SURELY THEY CANNOT BE GODS...CAN THEY?
A THOUSAND PROPHECIES FORETELL HIS DOOM.
BUT SHAKUNI WILL NOT GIVE IN TO FATE
HAIL, HAIL!
AFTER ALL, THE EMPEROR OF THE WORLD FIGHTS FOR HIM.

THE MACE IS HEAVIER THAN A MOUNTAIN
CLANG
HE LIFTS IT A THOUSANDTH TIME.
HIS MUSCLES QUIVER FROM THE STRAIN.
HIS BODY IS IRON, IN HIS BLOOD FLOWS LIGHTNING.
ON HIS BROW RESTS THE FATE OF MANKIND
HIS STRENGTH....LIMITLESS. NO MAN CAN FACE HIM.
HNNN

BUT TODAY HE FIGHTS NO MAN.
BHIMA WITH THE STRENGTH OF A HUNDRED LIONS, INCAPABLE OF TIRING
MASTER OF THE NINE HEAVENLY MACE FORMS, AND THE FOUR FORSAKEN ONES
HAS BEEN FOUGHT TO A STANDSTILL BY A MERE MORTAL.
THOOMM!!

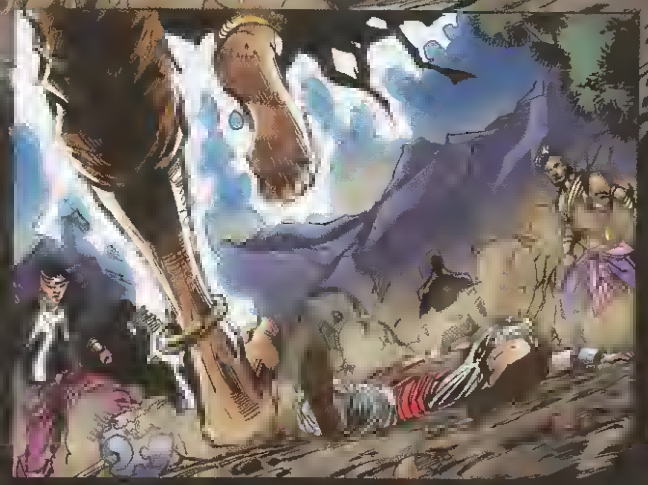
A THOUSAND BOONS, STOLEN FROM THE GODS COURSE OVER HIS DESTINY.
WHERE DID HE...
IN HUSHED WHISPERS THEY CALL HIM LIGHTNING BORN.

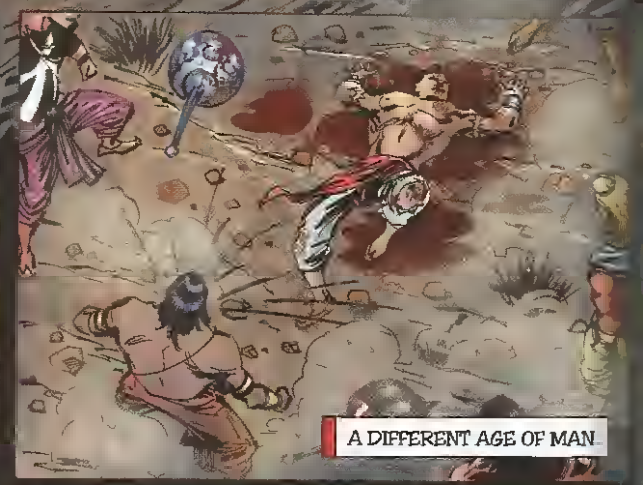
YET HE KNOWS IT WILL NOT BE ENOUGH.
BRAVO!
NOT NEARLY ENOUGH, HIS OPPONENT IS A MONSTER.
HE KNOWS WELL BHIMA'S PRODIGAL STRENGTH AND CONSTITUTION.
KNOWS IT WELL FROM THE COUNTLESS BEATINGS RECEIVED AS A CHILD.

FIVE YEARS, FIVE YEARS HE HAD BEEN BHIMA'S PERSONAL PUNCHING BAG.
HE HAD BEEN YOUNG. HE HAD BEEN WEAK. POWERLESS.
WELL, I'M NO LONGER POWERLESS.
WAS IT INSTINCT THAT STOPPED DIVINE BHIMA IN HIS TRACKS?
WAS IT FEAR?
BHIMA

COULD AN IMMORTAL FEAR DEATH?

BUT IT IS NOT SO EASY TO KILL A GODBORN
IN THAT ONE MOMENT
EVERY WARNING GIVEN BY HIS UNCLE
EVERY STORY HE HAD HEARD AND DISMISSED AS A CHILD RANG IN HIS HEAD
CRACK!!!
AND HE KNEW THIS WAS A BATTLE HE WOULD NOT WIN.





A TIME OF MONSTERS AND MEN.

THE END

I was very excited when Vivek offered me a chance to write a story of Duryodhan, the second greatest villain in our myhthology. Not just because it was a chance to work with Gurav Srivastav and Sumit Kumar, both tremendous artists capable of bringing long lost eons back to life. Not just because it was a chance to be a part of Showcase which I think is the most unique take on our mythology in current times. I like to think, it was because of Duryodhan himself.

Where Ravana embodied the supernatural, a malovalent entity bent on destruction and chaos, Duryodhan occupied the other end of the spectrum. They called him the Man of Lightning. An unstoppable force of anger and wrath, pride and envy. Driven by the basest of human emotions. Driven to strive against all hope of success against his betters. If there is a person in Hindu mythology who is utterly human as one recognizes humans in current times, it is Duryodhan. Easily manipulated, quick to anger at every chance. Ever short-sighted and envious of the obvious superiority of his more divine bretheren despite being an accomplished warrior and a master of war in his own right. He is to me a constant reminder of the frailities in our own nature.

What drove the Man of Lightning? A man tipping over and into his own personal downward spiral. Devoid of hope, devoid of any chance of victory. Yet fighting on to his own undistinguished finish. I would like to believe that in some small part it was the very same stubborness that drives us. Each and every one of us. Day after day toiling against the periodic dose of despair we like to call fate. So here's a tale of the last of us who chose to fight against Gods.

- Anirudh Singh.